

**ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
May 24, 2018**

The Architectural Design Review Board held a special meeting on Thursday, May 24, 2018 at 6:00PM at Stonington Town Hall, 152 Elm Street, Stonington, CT.

Attending were members, Michael McKinley, Susan Cullen, Mark Comeau, Bob Birmingham, Christopher Delaney and Alternate, Leslie Driscoll.

Members, Mollie Burton and Christopher Thorp were absent. Also present was Town Planner, Keith A. Brynes. Chairman McKinley called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.

Ms. Driscoll was seated. Mr. Comeau recused himself from the following application.

ADRB 18-02 – Review of application for new mixed-use building at 19 Roosevelt Avenue, Mystic. Assessor's Map 174 Block 15, Lot 5. Zone LS-5. Applicant – Mark Comeau / Owner – 2X Nice, LLC.

Mr. Brynes summarized the application which involves the demolition of an existing mixed-use building and construction of a new mixed-use building with a ground floor spa and 2 upper story dwelling units. The new building will be constructed in accordance with Flood Hazard regulations with a dry floodproofed basement and the ground floor 1' above the base flood elevation. The driveway to the west of the building will be replaced with screening. The existing shared driveway to the east of the building will remain. The rear parking area is legally non-conforming regarding buffer requirements but will be improved on the west side. The parking lot will be a pervious material.

Building design will reflect the existing building and 2 neighboring structures. Building height will be similar to the residential building to the east. Building materials will include hardi-plank siding for a historic appearance. A porch on the east side of the building will double as ADA access.

Ms. Driscoll stated that the new design is more attractive than the existing building. Mr. McKinley stated that while vinyl or aluminum siding can be inappropriate in a historic context but the siding chosen is appropriate. The proposal is consistent with the Board's design guidelines and the application is thorough. Mr. Birmingham asked whether more of a buffer is required. Mr. Brynes stated that the property is legally non-conforming with pavement nearly up to the property lines.

Mr. McKinley motioned to approve the application with 3 stipulations; seconded by Ms. Cullen. The motion was approved 5-0.

Stipulations:

1. In lieu of submission of building materials, the Board referenced the "Design Imagery" sheet submitted by the applicant.
2. Siding, trim and casings of architectural character such as Boral or Hardi products used are preferred to vinyl or metal.
3. Provide year round privacy buffer with planting on the north side.

Mr. Comeau was seated.

PZ1811RA Readco, LLC (T. Ladwig) – Zoning Regulation Text Amendment to modify ZR 6.6.20 Height Exceptions for Roof Structures and Architectural Features. Remove 5 percent of building footprint / 200 square foot maximum for commercial structures. Modify ZR 6.6.20.2 to add Commission option to require screening of rooftop equipment as deemed necessary.

Mr. Brynes stated that although the Board does not typically review applications for Zoning Regulation Amendments, the Board's input is sought on the following 2 applications which involve added flexibility for building height and design. Attorneys Ted Ladwig and Bill Sweeney represented Readco, LLC who are planning to develop a medical office building at 350 Liberty St. Zoning Regulations currently include an option to apply for a "height exception" by Special Use Permit which allows design features that are not for occupancy to be 10' above the maximum height limit. However these exceptions can only be used over a very small portion of a building's footprint – 5% of a building's footprint or 200SF in area, whichever is less. Mr. Ladwig described their proposal to remove the horizontal area limitations for non-residential buildings. The height exceptions allowed would not be any taller. Mr. Sweeney distributed a handout illustrating the regulation's effect on larger commercial buildings. The maximum exception of 200SF is very small compared to a large commercial building. Mr. Sweeney presented preliminary design concepts for Readco's proposed building. The existing regulation can prohibit architectural screening of rooftop mechanicals which are often required for large buildings. Removal of the limitations would allow greater design creativity and could prevent flat roofs designed to maximize building height.

Mr. McKinley stated that rooftop screening of mechanicals should be treated as an architectural design feature rather than an afterthought. Mr. Comeau stated that rooftop mechanicals are often required in flood hazard areas. Mr. Birmingham stated that changing the regulation could lead to an entire upper level dedicated to mechanicals.

Mr. Birmingham motioned to recommend the Regulation Amendment with 2 stipulations; seconded by Mr. McKinley. The motion was approved 6-0.

Stipulations:

1. A de facto additional level could be added for mechanicals.
2. Screening should be architecturally relevant to the building.

PZ1815RA Robert Walker & Lindsay Chamberlain (W. Sweeney) – Regulation Text Amendment to modify the provisions of ZR 7.3.5 24-foot design height limitation in coastal areas to allow, by Special Use Permit, a structure with the height limits established in ZR Sections 5.1.1 and 5.2.1.

Mr. Sweeney presented this Zoning Regulation Text Amendment application which would modify the Town's Coastal Design Height limitation. This regulation limits the overall height of a structure within 150' of the coast to 24' from average finished grade or the Base Flood Elevation (whichever is higher) to the peak of a building. The intent of this regulation is to prevent obstruction of coastal views. The proposed Regulation Amendment would allow coastal homes to be constructed up to the maximum height of the zoning district by Special Use Permit. The Special Use Permit process would require a public hearing and notification of neighbors; an applicant would have to show the Planning and Zoning Commission that the increased height would not negatively impact coastal views.

Mr. Sweeney's clients are proposing a residential building at 33-35 Money Point Rd. which is on a peninsula and would not impact neighbors' views. A preliminary design was distributed which featured several roof slopes and design features that would not be allowed under the current regulation. Mr. Sweeney stated that the amendment would offer architects more design flexibility and prevent flattened buildings with overly shallow roof slopes.

Mr. Birmingham stated that the current regulation does accommodate buildings that must be elevated due to flood hazard requirements. Mr. Sweeney stated that the regulation still offers a minimal amount of height making design of a 2 story building difficult. Traditional New England coastal architecture features steep slopes and design features that conflict with the current regulation. Ms. Cullen asked why a variance is not sought. Mr. Sweeney stated that in this case there is likely no "hardship" to warrant a variance for better design and that modifying the rule town-wide would be ideal. Mr. McKinley pointed out that the height regulations under zoning districts measure height to the mid-point of a sloped roof, meaning that overall roof height can be much higher than the regulations would suggest. Mr. McKinley recommended an alternative to allow the Coastal Design Height to be measured to the mid-point of the roof and not the peak; this would not require a Special Use Permit. This modification would allow for design flexibility but maintain the goal of limiting height along the coast. Mr. McKinley stated that the proposal as written conflates zoning with analysis of coastal views. Mr. Sweeney stated that such a modification would meet his client's goals. Mr. Comeau stated that views from the water are also important to the character of the community and that few, if any, historic residences would be allowed under the current regulation. Mr. Brynes mentioned commercial areas where the Coastal Design Height regulation also applies.

Mr. McKinley motioned to recommend the Regulation Amendment with one stipulation; seconded by Mr. Comeau. The motion was approved 6-0.

Stipulation:

1. A 24' midpoint would be a better way to keep the height reasonable, in tune with natural topographical patterns and consistent with the Zoning Regulations and appropriate scale of coastal architecture.

Review of Meeting Minutes: Mr. Birmingham motioned to approve the draft minutes of the 3/14/18 meeting; seconded by Mr. McKinley. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Driscoll motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Birmingham. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Cullen, Secretary